

The relationship lamp-bulb has been radically altered

(the current estimate is of at least one billion two hundred million people) could be provided with light at low cost since LEDs can be run on low levels of electricity, for instance those produced by solar panels.

As has always been in terms of the historical relationship between technological development and the design of useful objects, this leap in quality has resulted in profound changes in the conception of many appliances and in particular those used for lighting. The advent of this new light source has led to much reconsideration, with regard both to the quality of the light itself, in terms of its colour and intensity, and to the design of the appliances, in relation to the size and "shape" of the new source. The old relationship between lighting appliance and bulb of the incandescent type invented by Edison has been radically altered once again, and perhaps for good. Perhaps... because while on the one hand with LEDs we are dealing with a totally different kind of light source from that of an incandescent filament (and so the form of its container can be equally different),



Francesco Rota, Kin 479, oxxo, 2013

THE GREAT CLASSICS PUT TO THE DIODE TEST There are masterpieces of design that it would no longer make sense to produce. With the disappearance of the Edison bulb the functional and formal characteristics of the original have been radically undermined. And yet how can we give up on the formal and functional elegance, and especially from the spatial viewpoint, of Flos's Arco lamp designed by the Castiglioni brothers, or the iconic and intriguing force of the Pipistrello lamp Gae Aulenti designed for Martelli Luce? So LED versions of these celebrated pieces have been created, with the result that the Pipistrello has been completely hollowed out under the mantle/shade designed around the old light-bulb fittings and the light inserted in a section of the appliance's central support. In the Arco lamp, on the other hand, there is now, set slightly further back, a diffuser screen behind which are positioned the LEDs, pace the characteristic large holes originally made in the upper part of the shade to ensure the dispersion of heat, something that is no longer necessary with LEDs. The large Taccia table lamp, also designed by the Castiglioni for Flos, with its characteristic base resembling the cylinder of an engine (with fins to disperse the large amount of heat produced inside by a concealed high-power bulb), is still a beautiful object when fitted with LEDs, but perhaps with one less reason for its existence, at least with respect to the teachings of Achille Castiglioni.



Achille e Pier Giacomo Castiglioni, Arco, Flos, 1962



Achille e Pier Giacomo Castiglioni, Taccia, Flos, 1962